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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Central Intelligence Bulletin

State Department review completed

Top Secret

C-204

14 March 1973

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Approved For Release 2004/01/15 : CIA-RDP79T00975A024000060002-7

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MOROCCO: Clampdown on dissidents. (Page 5)

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MOROCCO: The armed forces and police are clamping down on dissidents following attacks last week on police posts in central Morocco.] 1, 4, 5

The government is exploiting the alleged Libyan and opposition party connections of the two armed groups that on 3 and 8 March attacked police posts in two widely separated hamlets in the rugged Middle Atlas region. An Interior Ministry communiqué stated that arrested members of the groups had confessed they were armed and trained in Libya and that their objective was to attack isolated Moroccan locations to create an atmosphere of insecurity and unrest. The leader of the attack on 8 March, who was killed during the clash, was identified as Mohamed Bennouna, a militant of the left-wing opposition National Union of Popular Forces (UNFP). Another militant, Omar Benjelloun, was among several party stalwarts identified as contact points; Benjelloun has been arrested. /

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[redacted] The King's reliance on the army to curb dissidence and thereby stem unrest probably is a mixed blessing for him; the enhanced role of the armed forces could encourage the military to attempt another coup.]

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[redacted] The Algerian authorities, who some months ago intercepted and confiscated arms shipments allegedly destined for Morocco, presumably will be on the lookout for armed Moroccan dissidents who might be attempting to transit Algeria to infiltrate the long, unmarked Algerian-Moroccan border.]

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